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Wants No "Witch Hunt" on Kennedy

# How I'd Handle Cuba—Ike Can't Say

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GETTYSBURG, Pa., May 1.—General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower urged today that there be no "witch hunt" to try to assess the blame for the Cuban debacle.

On the contrary, the former president, at his first press conference since leaving the White house, called on the country to support President Kennedy in any measures necessary to bar communism from the Western Hemisphere.

Except by very faint implication, Gen. Eisenhower declined time and again to criticize the performance of his Democratic successor.

He did disclose that as of now, at least he is calling off his trip to Japan next fall in accordance with the wishes of the State Department where there is concern that the time may be too troubled to make such a visit by a former President propitious. General Eisenhower showed no annoyance over this attitude and it is known that he will make the trip if international tension abates this summer and the State Department changes its mind.

Gen. Eisenhower's press con-

ference followed a meeting with Sen. Everett M. Dirksen, Ill., Senate minority leader, and Rep. Charles A. Halleck, Ind., House minority leader, met reporters and told them what a roasting they had given President Kennedy's program in their talks with Gen. Eisenhower.

Rep. Halleck, for example, told him that the Kennedy program has "laid a big egg so far," and Sen. Dirksen had added that it had not "generated any enthusiasm."

If Messrs. Halleck, Dirksen and the other leaders expected Gen. Eisenhower to join with them in making this the occasion of a feast of invective against the new President, they were disappointed. The General spoke like an elder statesman instead of a politician trying to up the exposition.

He said candidly that he did not know how he would have handled the Cuban situation if he had been in the White House during recent weeks. But there may have been at least an implication of criticism in the former President's next sentence:

"I might have been more particular about tactics or something else. This is not the time to rake over the ashes but to see what we should do in the days ahead."

Also, while he would not name any of Mr. Kennedy's proposals, many of which after similar proposals he himself had presented, he did say that he understood by his own recommendations, particularly in their scope and cost. Again, there was an implication of criticism when he added:

"No matter how much we say, we can afford what we want; a sound currency is the backbone of free enterprise."

## Won't Pass Judgment

In answer to a question, Gen. Eisenhower declined to pass judgment on the record of Mr. Kennedy's first hundred days in office. He did point out, however, as Dr. Kennedy's chief supporters, that it has been a period when grave international crises have absorbed the Pres-

ident. "I think it will be helpful if I speak with him from time to time and I find that if there was anything I could do to be helpful, I would do it."

## Sees Gains in U-2 Case

Asked for his opinion about the U-2 affair a year ago, Gen. Eisenhower said that the information the flights obtained were more important to the United States than the downing of one of the planes was embarrassing to him. No useful purpose, he said, could be achieved by "raking over those old coals."

He announced that he would speak at a dinner in Washington on June 1, honoring Republican members of Congress and at a testimonial dinner in Cincinnati on June 12 for former Secretary of Defense Neil H. McElroy.

He also disclosed that he hoped his meeting with Congressional leaders will become an annual affair.

Rep. Halleck said that today's talk with Gen. Eisenhower was "kinda like old times."

Gen. Eisenhower had breakfast with Rep. Halleck and Sen. Dirksen at his office on the campus of Gettysburg College. Afterwards, they were joined by other leaders.

These included Sen. Thaddeus B. Morton, Ky., chairman of the Republican National Committee; Sen. Thomas H. Kuchel, Calif., Senate minority whip; Rep. Leslie C. Aranda, Ill., House minority whip; Rep. John W. Byrnes, Wis., chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee; Rep. Charles B. Hoeven, chairman of the House Republican Conference; and Rep. Clarence J. Brown of Ohio, ranking minority member of the House Rules Committee.

The participants later met reporters in the gymnasium adjoining the Hotel Gettysburg, which had been the scene of many press conferences during Gen. Eisenhower's years in the White House.

When the reporters asked Sen. Dirksen before the President's arrival what Gen. Eisenhower thought of the "Ev and Charlie Show," as the Halleck-Dirksen weekly press conference is known, the Senator said that "the General thoroughly approves of these lead-

ership meetings."